

DIRECT ACTION



The Voice of Anarcho-Syndicalism No. 63 2 March/April 1990 30p

RED HERRING

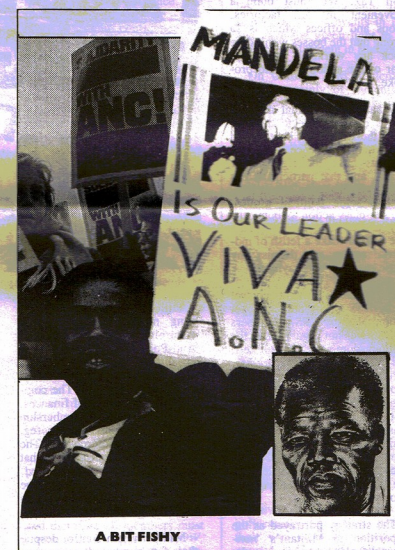
Nelson Mandela's release from prison and imminent canonisation, along with the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC), Pan African Congress (PAC) and the Communist Party (SACP) mark a watershed in South African political history. Today in South Africa, as in the Soviet Union, a political revolution from above is being staged, potentially as significant as that experienced 70 years ago.

In 1920 the South African boss class smashed a strike by white miners in the Rand gold fields and concluded a deal with the reformist wing of the white working class — the deeply racist South African Labour Party (SALP). The resulting Pact Government (1924) between the South African Party (big business) and the SALP, established in law total job segregation in the mines, skilled jobs for whites and excluded blacks from the very terms of definition of an 'employee', thus outlawing any attempt at black labour organisation. This period laid the economic basis for 'grand apartheid', which was created 25 years later. Today, capitalism in South Africa is seeking to engineer a new political and social contract in order to exploit black labour power more 'efficiently', using the ANC, just as in 1920 it used the SALP.

As Anarcho-syndicalists we stand with our class. We denounce personality cults which are designed to disarm the working class, whether they are in Poland or South Africa. Every day that sees Mandela and the ANC manoeuvring remorselessly to sacrifice the workers on the altar of a political settlement with apartheid capitalism, makes it more urgent for internationalists and revolutionaries to state clearly what is going on. Although the ANC is the immediate beneficiary of de Klerk's glasnost, the recent events are a coup for the ruling class. The regime has initiated and is in control of the process. The ANC's external leadership must now stamp their authority not only on Mandela in his diplomacy with the political/media circus which has descended on Soweto like a plague of locusts in the weeks following

his release, but also on the liberation movement inside South Africa. Already the logic of the situation leads the ANC to turn what was formerly their minimum demand for 'one person, one vote' into a maximum demand, one which Mandela has indicated is 'negotiable'.

At the same time the ANC are making a great deal of their refusal to renounce the armed struggle. This is a highly symbolic stance intended to distract radicals in the liberation movement from the very real opportunism which is going on in backroom negotiations with the ruling class. The armed struggle, in the sense of the military camps established in the frontline states by the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, and by the PAC, has always been a red herring, providing targets for the African Defence Force (SADF) and quite unable to launch a sustained military campaign even as successful as the IRA's. Umkhonto we Sizwe are modelled on elite military units, the armed struggle is not for the masses in the ANC's view, as the Young Comrades found out during the 1985-7 township uprisings when they requested arms from the ANC and were refused. The ANC's military wing can never be a credible threat to the SADF, it could however be used against



A BIT FISHY

elements in the liberation movement who pose a danger to the acceptance by the working class of any deal which emerges from the ANC/government talks.

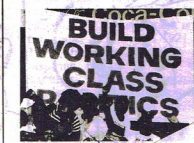
It is particularly galling for South African syndicalists to see the compromises being made by the ANC. Since the 1972/3 wildcat strike wave in Durban, syndicalists have been in the forefront of organising workers, fighting some of the most bitter and industrial disputes in South African labour history and making sure that the independent unions stay independent and belong to their members. Throughout the 1970's and 1980's they were slandered by the South African Confederation of Trade Unions (SACTU) the ANC's trade union front, as agents of the ruling class, for daring to

challenge the ANC's so-called 'leadership' of the working class. In truth SACTU was a shell by the mid-1960s with no real shopfloor organisation and whose Stalinist leadership was either in prison or in exile. The SACTU line during this period was that South Africa was a 'fascist regime' which could not tolerate 'independent' black workers unions. They repeatedly told the new union federations FOSATU, CUSA and then COSATU that if successful they would be co-opted by the state, if they refused to be co-opted they would be smashed. In fact, the new unions have not been co-opted and have not been smashed, despite the introduction of the State of Emergency. Now that the ANC is showing every sign of being co-opted into the state's political

strategy, syndicalists are asking 'what about the working class?'

The organised working class is essential to the ANC's strategy of pressuring the government to 'normalise' political relations. Since 1986/7 the ANC have launched a drive to control the leadership positions of COSATU and its constituent unions. They have also sought to have their political platform *The Freedom Charter* adopted by COSATU, despite the opposition of syndicalists and socialists in many unions such as the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA) to a 'cross-class' political perspective being foisted on workers' organisations. Rank and file members of COSATU know that the ANC for all their talk of a 'two-stage revolution' want to bury any notion of worker-led revolution and socialism as fast as they can shovel on the dirt.

At present there is an emerging liberal consensus in the West around a moderate/reformist ANC with Mandela at its head. There is no common interest however, between the envoys of western capitalism who are eagerly seeking assurances of goodwill from Mandela and the railway workers of South Africa who recently won the longest and bloodiest strike in the history of the industry. The political crisis in the state is being managed at present by the government, if it induces a political crisis in the liberation movement and particularly in COSATU we will see a battle for the political soul of the unions. In many respects COSATU is still a syndicalist union confederation — its emphasis on industry-wide org-



CONTINUEP

NO BULLSHIT

There has been considerable debate on the way forward for the anti-Poll Tax movement recently. This process has been accelerated by the Militant rally masquerading as an anti-Poll Tax conference in Manchester on November 25th. However, much of this debate has been portrayed as being a simple argument between two different tactics; mass non-payment and non-implementation through industrial action.

The primary task facing the movement is not to convince people not to pay, but to organise the resistance that will inevitably occur. Organising those who can't pay into the strongest possible force will mobilise those thousands who won't pay more effectively, and encourage more people to join the non-payment campaign.

Resistance takes many forms. Street level organisation is essential for building a mass non-payment campaign. Each street should be aware of their collective strength, and those able to do so should support the weaker parts of their community.

Isolated individuals can be picked off by the legal machine, but where they have the full backing of their communities, the law backs off. This has been shown time and time again in Scotland, where Sheriff Officers have been kept out and defeated by community resistance. In fact, there has not yet been a successful warrant sale in Scotland since the Poll Tax was introduced in April.

There also needs to be the fullest possible activity undertaken in the workplace. The most encouraging activity so far has been from CPUSA members in seven London Social Security offices, who took up to a week's unofficial action against form NHB10(cc), which grassed claimants up to the local Community Charge Registration Officer.

Anti-Poll Tax groups should be formed in all workplaces, across union boundaries where they exist. Most directly affected are council workers who are already facing wholesale job losses, as well as a tax most of them can't afford to pay. Moreover, certain groups of council workers will be directly involved in implementing the Poll Tax. Community Charge Sections should be organised well enough that when the Poll Tax is faltering, they will be able to demand, and win, transfers to useful jobs with protected salary and grade.

DSS workers have already taken limited action over the Poll Tax in London; that has to be spread. Judging by the prime movers of the NHB10 action, it will be rank and file militants who push for that. Postal workers should organise to boycott mail connected with the Poll Tax, and banking and finance workers should refuse to arrest wages.

However, it is not just a limited section of the working class which has a role to play in the fight. The threat of wage arrests and victimisation will be used against many who defy the Poll Tax. We must build a movement in the factories, shops and offices which is so strong that the bosses won't dare dock any worker's wages for fear of the action it would provoke.

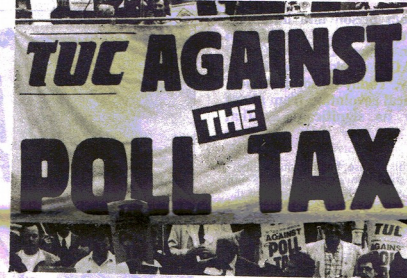
What is most crucial about all forms of resistance to the Poll Tax, though, is that they should build self-confidence. All participants have the right to be heard, and that participation is what will make us unbeatable. Unlike some political groups, we see class action as being the key to defeating the Poll Tax. We neither make a fetish of industrial action, nor dismiss any tactic but mass non-payment.

In London Militant control many DSS CPUSA branches, yet action taken by CPUSA members in DSS was not organised by the Militant-dominated Broad Left, but by rank and file activists, and received only halfhearted support from Militant. The extent to which Militant are out of touch with organised workers was illustrated by Steve Nally's main speech at the South London Trades Union Conference, which focused solely on the 1.5 million non-payers in Scotland.

The strategy portrayed as the opposition to Militant's 'non-payment alone can win' is the 'let's leave it to NALGO/the TUC/the Labour Party' strategy of the rest of the left. The Socialist Workers Party consistently ignored the growing community campaigns in Scotland

during 1988-89, arguing that only the industrial might of the working class had role to play in defeating the tax. It had to wait until the Poll Tax became an issue in England and Wales before the SWP realised that workers live in the community, and not in barracks at their places of work.

This concentration on the workplace alone ignores the role that many people not in paid work have to play. The potential of the community for fighting as a community is best shown by the Miners' Strike, and initiatives such as the Women Against Pit Closures. The community groups can provide the inspiration for workers, through working both within and with them. Links between the community campaigns and workplace organisations must be built now, and will become of vital importance in the struggle to come, especially if wage arrests are threatened.



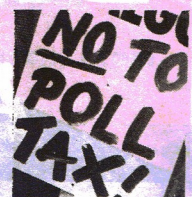
Militant's approach to organising non-payment is equally disturbing. When they set up an Anti-Poll Tax Union, they usually call a small meeting of supporters, elect a committee, and then 'go public'. The committee keep control of finances, correspondence, membership and any external relations (eg. delegates to conferences). The end result of this structure is that potential activists are excluded, and what little action the APTU's are willing to take is narrowly based.

Militant retain control despite their few numbers because they alone know when committee meetings are, and members meetings are so boring no-one can stick them. One Pepys Estate resident who had been fined complained that Pepys APTU in Lewisham talked about everything but the Poll Tax. Much of Militant's support in London takes this form, and it is not confined to England.

In Scotland Militant claim that there would only be 100,000 non-payers without them. Interestingly enough, the highest level of non-payment is not in some Militant stronghold in Strathclyde or Fife, but in the Western Isles! There 48% have refused to pay. Despite all their grand claims about leading the 'army of non-payers', Militant still find it necessary to maintain paper groups like Pilgrin in Edinburgh, which exist solely to elect Militant supporters onto committees.

After the Manchester 'conference' many activists all over Britain are now completely pissed off with Militant. They have acted to minimise involvement at every step, and have put forward some pretty harebrained ideas. One of their full-timers in Lewisham once stated that the way to involve people was to take them to the National Conference in Manchester - forget about doing any work on the ground!

They have shown that the thing they fear most is autonomy. They set up the London Steering Committee because they could not have controlled the democratic London Federation in which they were never involved. Their last minute reversal of their policy of excluding the London Federation from the organisation of the 10th February 'unity' conference represented a victory for the principled position of the Federation - it was Militant



ally, and which will cause them immense problems in the long term. The key factor in this is the leading role being taken by Anarcho-syndicalists in developing a trades union and workplace strategy in London, in conjunction with the trades councils. Having failed to control the union activists, Militant are being forced to tail them.

This campaign is too important to become the property of any one group, including the Labour Party. One of the things Militant and the other opportunists do to counter the threat of an autonomous anti-Poll Tax movement is bog it down in reformist politics by involving the Labour Party at a decision-making level. We believe that members of the Labour Party have a role to play, but as anti-Poll Tax activists, not as party members.

The left in Britain is still stuck, ostrich-like, with the transitional demand. Call on the Labour Party to do something you know it won't do, expose it, and suddenly 'the workers' will become politicised. Never mind advocating tactics that can win from the start, 'the workers' need to be 'taken through' the experience of a Labour government.

The involvement of people who do not represent the fight against the Poll Tax, ie. political parties, will reduce the popular orientation of the movement to sterile politicking, and it will lose its relevance to ordinary people. As that is the strength of the movement, we will fight bureaucratisation of our campaigns, and build autonomous organisations of working class people - in the workplace and the community.

MH & NR

RED HERRING continued from front page

anisation, rank and file control of union structures and reliance on tactics of workers solidarity and direct action, not parliamentary power politics.

In 1944 the Progressive Trade Union Group (PTU) led by Daniel Koza, split from the Congress of Non-European Trade Unions, over its SACP-inspired support for the war effort. The PTU soon collapsed in the wave of repression of the black unions which followed the second world war. Today, revolutionary syndicalists are in a much stronger position than in 1944. In the event of an economic crisis precipitated by a recession or a political crisis resulting in the ANC attempting to lead the working class into a social contract to reconstruct capitalism in South Africa, COSATU will

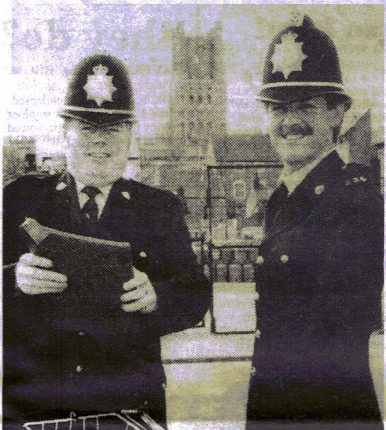
become the crucial test of the ANC's authority. The ANC hope that their call for nationalisation of major industries will take the sting out of the movement for workers' control in the unions.

South African workers do not need to be warned of the false promises of reformism, there are few countries in the world where the prospect of a revolution is so real, or so necessary. This is no coincidence, but a vindication of the belief that revolutionary politics applied at the heart of workers' economic organisations can be a formidable threat to the stability of capitalism. These are our beliefs in the International Workers' Association, this is what we mean by Anarcho-syndicalism.



LOCK UP YOUR DAUGHTERS

Recently, the South Yorkshire Police Force handed out a pamphlet which is very telling about their attitudes toward violence against women. The pamphlet, entitled *Safety First, Advice to Women on Personal Safety*, is certainly not very comforting. There is no doubt that many women are worried about becoming victims of violent crimes, a fear constantly reinforced by the TV and newspapers' regular sensationalist coverage of sex attacks.



This pamphlet does nothing to reduce that fear. Instead it only encourages women to become prisoners in their own homes and cars. Be a 'private person' it advises women afraid of violence. *'Don't advertise the fact that you live alone'*. Of course, everyone's neighbours know if you live alone, your workmates know if you're single and if you join a club or society people soon find out about your marital status. All of this is irrelevant anyway as most crimes committed against working class women are opportunist burglaries of home and cars, not mad axemen or rapists who search telephone directories looking for the title Miss, Ms or Mrs.

Nowhere in this pamphlet does it mention the fact that most rapes and sexual assaults are carried out in the home of the victim by a person she knows. It does give half a page over to so-called 'domestic violence' which, when compared to the page and a half given over to property coding and photographing your valuables gives a good example of where the police's priorities lie and what the police are all about.

This pamphlet encourages women to become cut-off and anti-social. It advises *'when in your car, lock yourself in'*. There is no mention of the danger you could be in in an accident. *'Don't stop to help others'* — and if your car breaks down lock yourself in and wait for help, no doubt from a copper as you can't trust anyone else!

Interestingly, the pamphlet states *'a woman under attack has every right to defend herself with reasonable force'*. You cannot use an offensive weapon but you can use things you might normally carry such as hair-spray, umbrella, car keys. But beware — the law says you must be attacked first, and more importantly, make sure if you get into a fight that the attacker can't take your weapon and use it against you.



they like in their homes (or elsewhere!) and that it's the perpetrator's problem, not the woman's. This myth is particularly dangerous because it basically says *'women with open curtains are at fault for attracting perverts'*. This myth is just one step away from *'women who dress provocatively are at fault for attracting unwanted attention and even rape'*.

Women should not, as the South Yorkshire Police would have it, need to stay in, locked up, under covers, wearing sack cloth and with the curtains drawn. Women (and men too) need to feel safe wherever they are, because for the vast amount of time their fears are unfounded. If anyone cares to look at statistics, on the streets the person with the most to fear is the young man (in New York City over 60% of violent street crimes are committed by young black men against young black men — i.e., gang violence due to poverty).

It is often hard for people to believe that these fears are exaggerated, what with the media gloating over every assault and the police exploiting this fear to help justify their existence. We must become less isolated — not more — to gain confidence. By getting involved in neighbourhood and workplace groups — such as with the Anti-Poll Tax groups — a feeling of community can be rekindled, something useful to help overcome fear. The powers that be want our class to be splintered and isolated, divided against itself. The only solution to anti-social crime within our class is to develop solidarity within the class and to therefore combat the exploitative relationships that sometimes exist between men and women. We must recognise that our common enemy is the boss class and the State, not each other. Such solidarity needs to be developed through mutual aid and education via working class organisations.

As Anarcho-syndicalists our aim is to build such organisations, to build revolutionary unions. People often think of unions in terms of narrow trade union definitions, of passing meaningless branch motions, of bureaucracy and of token gestures towards women, black people, gay people, etc. To us unions — revolutionary Anarcho-syndicalist unions — are preparation for changes to come and therefore all members must play a full and equal role NOW, based on need and ability, with no patronising election of people simply because they're lesbian or black, with no inbuilt majorities or whatever. By always being vigilant and challenging any tokenism or leadership (no matter how right-on someone is), then all manifestations of racism and sexism can be dealt with as they arise. But we must be equally vigilant against the leftist feminist (or black nationalist etc.) attitudes which foster the kind of guilty self-flagellation so prevalent amongst many men (and white people in general) on the left and in some parts of the anarchist scene. Our weapons against all these things are education and mutual aid — education meaning working toward an understanding of the realities of society and not just perpetuating myths from the right or the left; and mutual aid meaning working together for the benefit of our class.

DS & MA

HUNGARY '56

Given the importance of recent events in Eastern Europe, the re-publication of Andy Anderson's *Hungary '56* is timely indeed. First published by Solidarity in 1964, the book proclaims *'For years to come all important questions for revolutionaries will boil down to simple queries: Are you for or against the programme of the Hungarian Revolution? Are you for or against workers' management of production? Are you for or against the rule of the workers' councils?'*

Anderson gives the background to the Communist take-over in Eastern Europe, and the situation in Hungary under Stalinist dictatorship. In 1953, workers had rebelled in Czechoslovakia and East Berlin, and in 1956 Poland erupted. Gomulka, the Polish Communist Party chief, was able to wring concessions from a reluctant Kremlin because he had the backing of the people. Those tried afterwards for their part in the rebellion received noticeably light sentences. These events in Poland gave the green light to the intellectual ferment in Budapest.

On October 23rd, a demonstration, mainly of students in Budapest, made several demands. Among these were a more equal relationship between Hungary and Russia, the running of the factories by the workers themselves, the removal of Rakosi (the then party leader), and free and secret elections. A delegation from this demonstration went to Budapest Radio to demand that they be heard.



However, trigger-happy secret policemen, the AVO, barred their way, and then machine-gunned the crowd. After the massacre the workers armed themselves and the battle began. Anderson emphasises that the uprising was spontaneous. Given conditions in Hungary, it couldn't have been organised by a hierarchical party or group, because any leaders would have been picked off immediately. The workers relied on completely different methods of organisation. The lesson spelt out is that 'if revolutionaries organise like those... they seek to overthrow, they are defeated before battle is engaged'.

On October 24th, Russian tanks entered Budapest. The resistance of the workers and soldiers defeated them, and Anderson's book shows that the Hungarians didn't just fight with courage and heroism, but also with humanity. Many Russian troops fraternised with the revolutionaries, and some even deserted simultaneously, workers' councils were formed, and a

general strike called. The programmes of the councils differed, but they all had basic points in common: abolition of the AVO, withdrawal of Russian troops, political and civil liberty, workers management of industry, independent trade unions and freedom for all political parties, as well as a general amnesty. Stalinists throughout the world claimed this was a 'fascist counter-revolution'. However, resolutions from the free trade unions revealed that the workers understood that the bureaucracy was just another class of parasites, just as the capitalists had been before.

On October 30th the Red Army withdrew with assurances from Nagy, the new Hungarian leader, that they wouldn't be back. On November 4th, all the major cities in Hungary were shelled, and the barricades went up again. This time however, the Kremlin was serious about crushing the revolution. Members of the workers' councils were arrested, and workers



hung from the bridges over the Danube. Janos Kadar, the Kremlin's new puppet (Nagy had been abducted and executed in Romania), admitted *'the people do not always know what is good for them'*. In this he was echoing Trotsky who had said the same in relation to Kronstadt in 1921. Of the Kronstadt Soviet, Trotsky said *'they have come out with dangerous slogans! They have made a fetish of democratic principles! They have placed the worker's right to elect representatives above the Party'*. As Marx said, *'the emancipation of the working class is the task of the working class itself'*. This statement is as true today as it was in 1921 or 1956. *Hungary '56* paints an inspiring picture of how the workers can emancipate themselves, and totally destroys the Leninist myth that workers left without a Party are only capable of a 'trade union consciousness'.

Hungary
Phoenix Press
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A STATE OF COLLAPSE

It's a cliché, but nonetheless true, that we live in exciting times...

The end of 1989 saw neo-Stalinist regimes in Central Europe fall one after the other under the pressure for reform from the people. Gorbachev came to power in 1985 with a programme ('glasnost' and 'perestroika') to reform the USSR in order to get the moribund economy moving. But in making piecemeal reforms he opened the way for the slow but steady process of disintegration of the Russian empire. And it isn't stopping at the USSR's borders, as the events in the Baltic States and Transcaucasia show.

The popular movements in Central Europe which have thrown off the Stalinist yoke are politically immature, not surprisingly after so many years of dictatorship. They tend to have illusions about 'Western-style parliamentary democracy' (Though at least some of the activists in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria say they don't want to exchange one form of oppression for another).

And of course, cast iron cold warriors like Thatcher in the West are busy making capital from the disintegration of the Russian empire. Another worrying development has been the re-emergence of neo-Nazi groups riding on the wave of German nationalist sentiment (calling for a united Germany with its pre-1945 borders, and even a chunk of Poland!).



But on the whole anarcho-syndicalists welcome the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the neo-Stalinist monolith. It opens up the way for what should be on the agenda East and West... *Social Revolution.*

At school in the 'Free World' we were taught that NATO was created to defend the West from the 'communist' hordes. They never told us that NATO was set up before the Warsaw Pact, and that the USSR tried at first to join NATO! Stalin wasn't the only one responsible for the Iron Curtain coming down for 40 years. Churchill and Roosevelt had at least as much to do with it. And now that the Warsaw Pact is crumbling before our eyes, what possible justification can there be for NATO and the obscenity of billions spent on armaments while half the world goes hungry?

Amidst all the euphoria surrounding the breaching of the Berlin Wall, why weren't we also told about the anti-fascist demonstrator run down and killed by a police car in Göttingen (West Germany) at around the same time? How many people know that in 1988 anarchists from West Berlin had to scale the wall near the Brandenburg Gate and seek refuge in East Berlin from a police charge?

Our rulers in the West are rubbing their hands with glee at the prospect of new markets and cheap labour in the East. But the collapse of the Russian empire opens up prospects for the international working class also. The decks have been cleared. When we agitate in the West no longer will they be able to shout 'go back to Russia'. And no longer will the authorities in the East be able to label dissidents as 'Western agents'.

At the same time state socialism comes out of all this totally discredited. After more than 70 years in the USSR and 45 years in her former Central European satellites, in which to build a communist society what are the heirs of Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin busy doing? Why they're bringing back the very things the 1917 Russian Revolution sought to abolish, so-called 'free enterprise' (capitalism) and bourgeois democracy.

Some marxists began to term the USSR as 'State Capitalist' rather than a 'Workers State' after Trotsky lost his power struggle with Stalin in the late 1920s. But way back in 1872 Mikhail Bakunin, a collaborator with Marx in the International Workingmen's Association, and the father of anarchism and anti-Statist socialism, warned what the marxian programme of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' and a 'Workers State' would lead to: 'In reality it would be for the proletariat a barrack regime, where the standardised mass of men and women workers would wake, sleep, work and live to the beat of the drum; for the clever and learned a privilege of governing; and for the mercenary minded, a vast field of lucrative jobbery'.

In 1917 the Russian anarchists took an active part in the Revolution, only to be attacked in 1918 by the Bolsheviks they'd fought alongside, who were now busy liquidating opposition on the Left and building their 'Workers State'.

In an area of the Ukraine the anarchist partisan Nestor Makhno gave his name to a movement, the Makhnovshchina, which between 1918 and 1921 fought successive White armies and Trotsky's Red Army as it defended the free communes and soviets in the area it controlled. The Bolsheviks made an alliance with the Makhnovists three times in order to jointly defeat invading White armies, and each time turned on the Makhnovists once the Whites had been seen off. Lenin and Trotsky could not allow the Makhnovist experiment of a communism free of the dictatorship of the party.

The last flicker of the revolution was extinguished at the Kronstadt naval base in 1921. Lenin had called the Kronstadt sailors 'the flower of the Revolution'.

the Communist Party dictatorship with its Cheka and State Capitalism'. Needless to say, the Kronstadt revolt was crushed mercilessly by the Red Czars.

Stalin pact of 1939, the East Berlin workers uprising in 1953, the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, Poland 1980, and in 1989 the



tion' in 1917. When in 1921 the same heroes of the Revolution (many of them rank and file Bolsheviks) revolted and tried to rescue the Revolution from the bureaucrats, Trotsky said 'We'll shoot you down like partridges'.

Kronstadt replied: 'Having gained power the Communist Party is now fearful only of losing it... Here in Kronstadt has been laid the corner-stone of the Third Revolution to break the last chains of the worker and open the new, broad road to socialist creativeness... leaving behind the Constituent Assembly with its bourgeois regime, and

After Stalin came to power most of the old Bolsheviks ended up being liquidated by the 'Workers State' they'd helped to build, during the purges of the 1930s. Their final shout before the firing squad was 'Long Live the Revolution', not realising the enormous irony of their own end. Meanwhile millions of peasants starved as a direct consequence of the crazy policy of forced collectivisation.

Then there was the Stalinist sabotage of the Spanish Revolution in 1936 (because it was mostly the work of anarchists rather than marxists), the Hitler-

whole house of cards collapsed. In the USSR itself last summer striking miners in Siberia voiced an old slogan from the 1917 Revolution - 'All Power to the Soviets!'

State socialism (or rather state capitalism, as Bakunin warned 120 years ago) is 'withering away' before our eyes. As we head towards the new millennium is the world in for a total capitalist restoration? The only real alternative is libertarian (real) communism, or anarchy, without the state and the party.

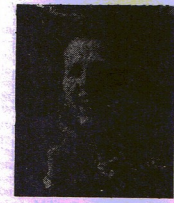
DM

ALL CHANGE

The Stalinist states of Eastern Europe are in crisis, and their ruling classes are in a terminal panic. From the Baltic to the Balkans, it seems that the Bolshevik Empire is at last breaking up under the onslaught of People's Power! Events are moving so fast it is difficult to keep up with them, and constantly trying to predict what will be the final outcome.

It is clear however that the old regime is coming to an end, and the bankruptcy of Marxism is now apparent to all. When the first signs of collapse were noticed there was rejoicing in the West. In the camp of Thatcher (President for Life) the news was received with gloating pleasure.

This turn of events came at a time when Thatcherism was running into trouble. These developments seemed to offer The Leader a new lease of life when her ideas were beginning to have a distinctly tatty look. She tried to present the events in Eastern Europe as the final triumph of the Thatcherite revolution! Was there to be no limit to her victories? Was the whole world going to copy her? I think not! Thatcherism is already past its peak.



The Socialism of East Germany has the workers voting with their feet and rushing to the embracing consumerism, if not full blown capitalism. The mistake of Thatcher is to assume that Thatcherism is the only



alternative to state Socialism. I would predict that the fascist corporate state is due for a comeback in the very near future. We must try to use these times of turmoil in Europe and attempt to introduce onto the stage the ideals and practice of Anarcho-syndicalism.

Recently, the IWA has held a series of international conferences and meetings to plan a coherent response to the dramatic events which are shaking states in Eastern Europe (and the West) to their very foundations.

At a recent conference near Cologne, DAM delegates participated in wide ranging discussions on the developing situation in Eastern Europe, Russia and China. Reports were given on the situation in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czech-

oslovakia and China regarding independent radical workers unions such as SMOT (Russia), Fighting Solidarnosc in Poland, Munkas-szolidaritassz in Hungary, and the Autonomous Workers Union of China.

It is necessary to acknowledge that the situation is very fluid and changeable, but it is sufficient to note that an action campaign is to be organised in relation to Poland, Russia and China. This has already been launched, but action will intensify in the new year.

Towards the 1990s! Towards a new Era!

JCB

ON TOUR

In late April, the DAM will be organising a tour of Britain by an Anarcho-syndicalist from East Berlin. Obviously, something of this nature does not come cheap, therefore it would be appreciated if comrades could send donations to help cover the cost of the tour and air fares. For more information and sending donations write to: DAM International Secretary, PO Box 122, Doncaster, DN4 7AT. Please make all cheques payable to International Solidarity Fund.

INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

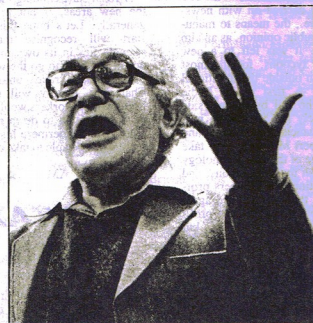
Part 2 - Rank and Filism

The DAM was set up in 1979 out of what was then a chaotic anarchist movement made up of tiny regionally-based groups. In fact, one of the main reasons the DAM was formed was because people did see the need for a national organisation. Since then, the DAM has changed radically, not only becoming more democratic but far more sophisticated with a fairly worked out Anarcho-syndicalist theory. But as Anarcho-syndicalists it is basic to our beliefs that we build an organisation which is not only revolutionary but is rooted in the day-to-day struggles of our class, i.e., an organisation which is both economic and political. The problem facing us is that the DAM only acts as a political organisation.

In the past, many saw the solution to this problem in building a Rank and File type organisation. Indeed, there were a number of motions calling for Rank and Files at the last conference. Of course, this is not surprising, as Rank and Files do have a number of attractions to Anarcho-syndicalists. They are more democratic, seek to cut across sectional interest and often argue for direct action. But because of the way they have operated in the past and their relationship to reformist trade unions, we must question if they do offer us a way forward.

Rank and Files have appeared in different forms: the National Minority Movement, Broad Left and the National Rank and File Movement to name but a few. Though at various times they have been able to mobilise ordinary workers, Rank and Files have been dominated by Marxist sects, the political outlook of the sect reflecting the way a particular Rank and File operated. For example, the Militant run Broad Left seek to get supporters elected to positions in reformist unions at branch level right up to national level, whilst the SWP dominated Rank and Files of the 70's did see the need to organise independently of the union bureaucracy. Of course, they all saw Rank and Files not only as recruiting grounds but as a way of increasing their influence on the unions. This followed form their political theory, that the unions were the place where workers organised at an economic level, whilst the 'more advanced' would wish to organise on a political level and join their organisation.

Though the 'electoral



CLIFF EXPOSES THE SWP'S WORKING CLASS MEMBERSHIP

machine' approach of the Broad Left was rejected out of hand by anarcho-syndicalists, it was the Rank and Files of the seventies that DAM members saw as a model, flawed as they were, of organisations which could be adapted towards an to an anarcho-syndicalist perspective. Their democratic structures, their constant attacks on mistrust of the union bureaucracy, and the fact that the SWP had, at the time, constant worries that they would begin to take on a syndicalist life of their own, were all put forward in their favour. It is for this reason that we would like to look at the Rank and Files of the 70's in some detail.

The National Rank and File movement was set up in 1973 by the International Socialists (now SWP). Two conferences were organised, each attracting around 500 people. A number of delegates were from small Rank and Files which had recently been set up in several industries. The conference never got past being rallies, with the various political factions all attempting to out-do each other. The two most established Rank and Files at the time were the electricians and building workers based around the papers Flashlight and Building Worker Charter. Both were Communist Party dominated and so boycotted the conferences. In fact, the conferences were attacked on the front page of the Morning Star as IS fronts. The NRM never functioned as a national organisation and was dropped by the IS/ SWP.

While it is true to say that the NRM failed, many based on individual industries and unions were highly successful, lasting

from the early 70's to the early 80's. Most were set up on the initiative of the IS and, as such, tended to be dominated by that group. Though there were variations between groups, with some making vague references to the nationalisation of industry, they were, in the main, devoid of revolutionary politics. You will search in vain for any attempt to link the day-to-day struggles with the need to transform society. The links between the Labour Party and the Unions were never challenged, in fact attacks on the Labour Party were restricted to 'right-wing' leaders. Their aims were limited to reforming the unions and defending pay and conditions by the use of industrial action.

This cannot be simply put down to the SWP's influence, but to the nature of the Rank and Files. They were not made up of the somewhat mythical ordinary militant worker with no strong political affiliations, but Trade Union activists who were members of political groups with axes to grind, who came together, sinking their political differences to the lowest common denominator, that is militant Trade Unionism. Perhaps a quote from NALGO's Rank and File group's paper, *NALGO Action News*, will illustrate this. The editorial stated, 'the future development of NALGO Action Group (NAG) remains as it always has, in the hands of its supporters whose political persuasions are less important than their common desire to work for greater democracy and militancy within NALGO and the larger TU movement'.

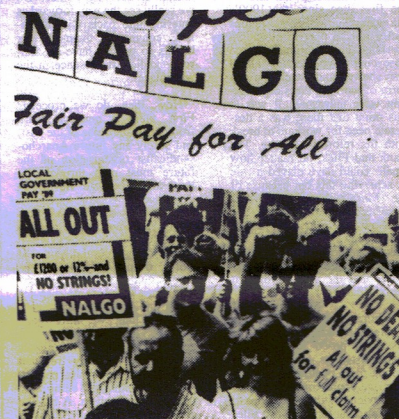
The relationship between the Rank and Files and the Trade Unions must also raise doubts with Anarcho-syndicalists. Their belief that the Unions could be reformed led them to spending much time and energy working within Union structures standing outside the workplace. This ranged from caucus meetings before union meetings, building support for national conferences and, following the logic of the argument, standing for positions at branch level right up to national level. There were, again, differences between groups, but the best organised ran for national positions on a Rank and File platform. Some even put forward people for TUC elections. The reasons given for standing candidates was often the SWP line of 'they are not against leadership as long as they have the support of the membership' and 'building a rank and File that will support our leadership when it is right and act independently when it is wrong' and so it goes on. Of course, people who opposed this position were branded as 'Ultra-Left', as were the members of the Building Worker Rank and File who managed to overturn, if only for a short time, that group's position of supporting 'left wing' candidates.

It is true to say that Rank and Files did some excellent work around various disputes, but by acting as a group standing

somewhere between the union bureaucracy and the workplace they also played a negative role. By constantly arguing for changes to the union structure, the need to make branches more democratic, the need for the leadership to be more accountable etc., they not only offered false hope but channelled energy and discontent away from the real problem, the Social Democratic nature of reformist unions.

Perhaps if we look at one Rank and File group in more detail, we can illustrate better some of the points already raised. The group we would like to use is NALGO Action Group (NAG), not only because it was

of their paper, for example, where three main articles consisted of one arguing for the need for a revolutionary party, one for the need to support reform of the Labour Party, and the other for the need to join the T&G! With political differences kept to a minimum, NAG was free to get on with the job of reforming the union. They had plenty of success, with many of the things NAG campaigned for now being part of the NALGO structure. But at the end of the day, we must ask if all the hard work put in by NALGO members and the victories they gained made NALGO any more democratic, let alone anarcho-syndicalist in perspective. The answer must be no. The net result of ten years



one of the most successful Rank and Files but because it argued for militant action in the growing white-collar sector, which had not been noted in the past as a hot bed of Trade Unionism. NAG was set up in 1971 with just a handful of members. Although it grew to a reasonable size, its influence far outgrew its relatively small membership. It was run on democratic lines, having a regular internal bulletin with the organisational structure based on regions. Its paper grew from being a tatty bimonthly rag to a well produced monthly magazine. The aims of the NAG were for one union for the public sector to be run democratically, ending of the state run Whitley Council negotiating machinery, and for the setting up of a Shop Stewards system.

One of the NAG's strengths was that it was able to put forward a strong coherent line based on the need for militancy and grass-roots organisation. Political issues were only raised when promoting SWP fronts like the Right to Work March or the Anti-Nazi League. This of course, was the NAG's strength. Other groups, where political differences were raised, ran into all sorts of problems. Faction fighting in the railway's Rank and File led to its collapse, whilst in the Building Worker squabbles surfaced in one issue

effort by NAG members is that NALGO has become more accountable not to ordinary members but to union activists.

The failings of the 70's Rank and File have to be set against that period. The 50's and 60's had seen the working class make many gains in their standards of living. They had achieved this by the use of what was, in the main, unofficial industrial action centred around shop stewards, putting the ruling class on the



defensive. Unfortunately, this had not led them to break with reformist politics, the TUC and the Labour Party still dominated. The late 60's saw capitalism go into decline, with the need to restructure the economy, and to do this working class militancy had to be curbed. The first attempts to do this were by the use of traditional consensus methods. First by the Labour Party who tried to introduce 'In

CONTINUED
ON PAGE 6

INDUSTRIAL
STRATEGYCONTINUED
FROM PAGE 5

Place of Strife provoking so much opposition that it had to be dropped. Then the Heath government introduced the Industrial Relations Laws, leading to a virtual general strike in 1972 and ended with Heath being brought down by the miners in 1974.

The final attempt was made by the Labour Party who introduced the Social Contract, ending in the so-called 'Winter of Discontent'. After this, Thatcher came to power and for the first time since the 1900's the idea that reformist unions had a role to play in managing working class militancy (and absorbing revolutionary ideas) was shelved and attacks on any form of working-class organisation were unleashed. It was at this point that there was a desperate need for workers to break with the reformist unions. The Rank and Files, no matter how small, could have played a role in achieving this but because of the Marxist dominance they were reduced to arguing for trade union reform. They sucked activists away from where the need to argue for revolutionary politics was greatest, the workplace, into the sterile world of Marxist parties.

Having raised some of the problems Rank and Files of the past have posed for Anarcho-syndicalists, we must ask if by joining them or helping to form them we could correct some of the obvious faults. In the past, when arguing for Rank and Files we have made it a precondition for our entry that they should be independent of political parties. But we must question whether this would have the desired effect of stopping Marxist dominance. Surely by arguing for this we are just seeking a militant Trade Union organisation devoid of political content. This will not put off political parties, in fact, it's playing into their hands. We must be clear: the Trots have no intention of trying to politicise a Rank and File organisation, that's the last thing they want. What they aim to do is keep Rank and Files on an economic level and politicise individuals within it, getting them to join 'the party'. We could of course, try to beat them at their own game and use Rank and Files as recruiting grounds for the DAM, but would it work? How would the line go? 'Watch out for the Trots, they were right bastards at Kronstadt, anyway they're only interested in recruiting you into their party... er... ever thought about joining the DAM'. Even if this were to work would it bring us any nearer the organisation we wish to see?

The other approach we could use is by seeking to inject politics into Rank and Files. This, again, would present us with a number of problems. Firstly, as already mentioned, when political differences are raised the result, all too often, is meetings

and a paper consisting of arguments and in-fighting, with time and energy wasted on trying to out-do other factions. If this does not result in the Rank and File falling apart, it would just end in them being seen as sectarian battle grounds which would put people off.

The second danger for us is that the various Marxists, all of whom only see Rank and Files as non-political bodies, would unite around that platform, leaving us in a minority. But before people start having visions of bold DAM members battling it out with the Trots, let us ask how it will look when these Rank and Files start to reach out to workers, especially around disputes. The pressure on us then will not be to rock the boat by raising differences, and at best we will again be reduced to trying to sell the paper etc., to militants involved in the dispute. Of course, we could form or enter into Rank and Files and win the arguments, even ending with an Anarcho-syndicalist organisation, but why bother? Do we really see the way forward as entering into pacts with Marxists, converting them to our beliefs so we can have an Anarcho-syndicalist presence in the workplace?

How, then, do we proceed? First, there is much to learn from Rank and Files of the past, and surely any future Anarcho-syndicalist organisation of the future must pass through the Rank and File stage. But if that organisation is not based on clear Anarcho-syndicalist beliefs it will be doomed to be nothing more than a militant body, at best working around disputes, at worst trying to reform the unions, with a tendency to stagnate when there are no disputes going on. And there is the rub. For too long we have gone around with the belief that countless numbers of militants who having already rejected Marxist and reformist politics are just waiting to bump into Anarcho-syndicalism. A bit like getting God. Of course, this is not the case: there is plenty of discontent but if we do not offer an alternative the Marxists will. We are not going to put our politics in any clear way by entering Rank and File groups. The way ahead must lie in establishing networks both in the community and workplace, backed by our organisation, that will relate the day-to-day struggle with revolutionary politics. Only after these are established can we move to a genuine Rank and File based on our politics, which would be the embryo of future anarcho-syndicalism.



In DA 64 we will conclude this mini-series on the DAM's Industrial Strategy with our policy on Industrial Networks, our solution to the inadequacies of Rank and Files.

OUT OF
PRINT

A few years ago the national newspaper printers were in retreat. The 'custom and practice' of Fleet Street was smashed by combinations of technological change, political repression and business cunning that took advantage of relocation to utilise both in order to smash national newspaper unionism.

In 1926, this section of unionism, traditionally among the best organised and best paid, was smashed utterly. Their refusal to print an issue of the *Daily Mail*, violently assailing the miners because of their call for a general strike, was taken by Rothermere as a threat by the workers to take over and be free to say what should be printed, and by the government as the

through years of hardship owing to the depression. But the nature of daily newspapers, which cannot be sold the day after production, made even minor strikes a major menace to capitalist profit. As in most cases newspaper production was a springboard to profits outside the industry itself, capitalists accepted as a fact of life to lose a few pounds on the swings (the

ability, a sacrifice the bosses willingly made.

There is no longer a Beaverbrook to win a bet by helping his side to lose. But the situation of powerlessness will not last. Gradually the tycoons are finding that they need the workers after all, despite the fact that production has changed. Some managements are finding that having cut staffing to the bone, they are now short of labour to bring their products out. Since technological change has enabled more papers to be brought out, hundreds made redundant are now drifting back.

People who came into the ind-



general strike itself' and the excuse for a national lock-out.

After the capitulation, Lord Rothermere, publisher of the *Daily Mail*, was the most vindictive. Nobody was re-employed unless they gave up membership of unions; wages were cut to the bone; activists were black-listed. How the proprietors rejoiced! Almost all followed Rothermere's 'bold lead'. But not quite all. Lord Beaverbrook went round quietly picking up all the skilled staff for even higher wages than they had before and cornered the market in unskilled staff as well. Panic followed when within a few months the effect became apparent.

The accepted wisdom that proprietors 'gave work' to workers for which they should be grateful and that they needed the capitalist but the boss did not need them, was seen as bullshit. The pendulum went another way. The most ruthless employers in the land, who lectured other capitalists on the need for toughness, had to go into the market and try and outbid for staff, and within a few years the workers weren't just back where they had been, they were considerably in advance both as regards wage levels and industrial muscle. This did not apply to other workers, the miners for instance, who went

national press) and gained a fortune on the roundabouts (the products they boosted, television, publishing, political power, contracts they influenced).

Some, like the cocoa-Quaker Cadbury family, gave up their Liberal organs the *News Chronicle* and the *Star*, with major redundancies, to concentrate on the fortunes coming their way from the book publishing and TV sides.

Others carried on with newspapers, i.e., the means to manufacture public opinion, as an aim in itself. It was left to a new wave of tycoons, for the most part from outside the traditional industry — first of all Eddie Shah, who fell by the wayside corporately but with huge personal financial betterment, and then Rupert Murdoch — to take advantage of the new technology and smash the print unions, and make national newspapers profitable in themselves once again (they would now make a profit even without advertising, but they still have it as well).

As in 1926 hundreds have been put outside the industry, hundreds have had wages cut or stabilised, hundreds more, entitled to redundancy or pensions, have had these stolen as the price to pay for this profit-

ustry for new styles of work are now organising, though the print chapels are no longer as powerful as they used to be.

The old chapels were built up on a spirit of confrontation and solidarity, but because of their official links with the labour movement generally fell prey to political negotiation (relying on parliamentary intervention) rather than industrial negotiation where the strength lay.

A fresh start is being made in the new areas, if not in print generally. Let's hope this new start will recognise that its strength lies in its own muscle, not in agreeing to go the way of conventional trade unionism. That way, history will repeat itself and the workers would also be in a position to do in reality what gave Rothermere his 1926 nightmare: be able to take over.

AM

POLL TAX
DEMO

Middlesborough Against the Poll Tax will be having a march and rally in Middlesborough on March 24th against the Poll Tax. Assemble 11am at the Cenotaph, rally at Central Gardens.

MANACLED MUTINEERS?

The struggle against discrimination and for national liberation in Ireland is entering its fourth decade. As retrospective looks at the '80's are used to consign them to the past and to look forward to the Euro-'90's, even older ghosts are returning to haunt British imperialism.

Back in November Peter Brooke, British direct ruler of the Six Counties, made a statement that the IRA could not be defeated militarily, and hinted that there were circumstances in which the British state might negotiate with the Republican Movement. Although he stressed the old chestnut of talks being conditional on a unilateral renunciation of violence by the Republicans, he pointed to Cyprus as an example of a politician declaring that the British would never talk to the EOKA nationalist guerrillas, and then having to eat his words one year later.

In justifying his statement by reference to Cyprus Brooke has displayed a rare piece of honesty. He has, in effect, admitted that the war in Ireland is, as far as the British state is concerned, a holding operation. He has also put it in its proper context of the longer process of decolonisation of the British Empire, and in doing so conceded that even in Ireland today's 'terrorist' is going to be tomorrow's 'statesman' at some stage in the future. The shit promptly hit the fan.

None of the reactions were particularly surprising. The Unionists were livid, the 26 County establishment and the SDLP (the Catholic middle class party in the Six Counties) welcomed the statement and called on the IRA to (unilaterally) declare a cease-fire.

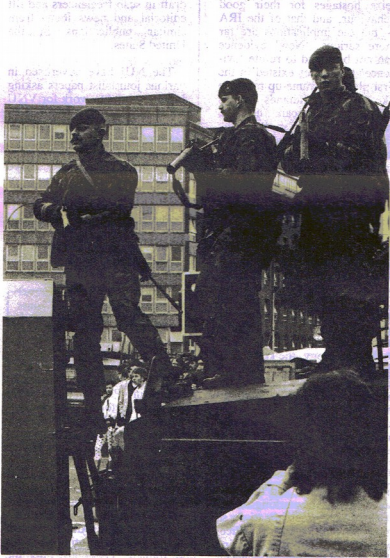
Opportunism was also the order of the day for the British Labour Party. Kevin McNamara used it as an opportunity to attack the government and curry favour with the Tory backbenchers and the Unionists. He wanted Brooke to 'make it clear that no-one can force their way to the conference table by violence or the threat of violence'. Hardly surprising that Norman Tebbit is scared that a soft line on immigration from Hong Kong will deliver the racist vote the Tories have used to gain working class support into the hands of Labour.

Rather than drawing the obvious conclusion that thousands of lives have been wasted in a war the British state knows it cannot win, and that it should declare its intent to withdraw, the politicians used Brooke's statement to attempt to undermine the Republicans' base of support.

Criticism intensified as the IRA demonstrated why they cannot be defeated. On 18th November three paratroopers were killed in County Down when their armoured Landrover was blown across the road by a 1,200lb mine. A fourth occupant of the vehicle was seriously injured, and those of the second Landrover also sustained blast injuries.

Earlier that day a Military Police sergeant was seriously injured by a booby trap as he got into his car in the English garrison town of Colchester. Embarrassingly, Tom King, Defence Secretary and previous direct ruler, had visited the barracks the previous evening, and had told journalists that he was satisfied with the security arrangements.

Another IRA operation which hit hard at British army morale took place on the afternoon of 13th December. A dozen IRA volunteers, one driving a van bomb and the rest in a sandbagged lorry, attacked a Permanent Vehicle Checkpoint at Derryard



IT KEEPS THEM OCCUPIED

on the Fermanagh/Monaghan border. An RPG7 rocket launcher, a flamethrower, two General Purpose Machine-guns, assault rifles and grenades were used to take out three watchtowers and clear the yard of the barracks.

The IRA then called on the British troops to surrender, but received no reply. The van bomb was driven into position, and the IRA withdrew without suffering any casualties despite coming under fire from surrounding fields. A Wessex helicopter carrying reinforcements was also driven off. Two British soldiers were killed and another two injured, one critically, in the attack, but the barracks was not completely destroyed as some of the explosives failed to detonate.

The effect attacks like these have had on British army morale and recruitment is becoming increasingly clear. Two programmes on BBC2's *Inside Out* had details leaked to *The Observer* when their transmission was delayed. The programmes showed interviews, one with officers the other with 'other ranks', of members of the 1st Light Infantry after the August 1988 coach bombing at Ballygawley, Co. Tyrone, in which eight of their number died.

The programme not only showed the shattered morale of the soldiers, but also highlighted the class tensions in the army. After Ballygawley Major Ron Berry claimed that 'despite this great loss to the 1st Battalion, the spirit of the regiment is first class'. The squaddies tell it differently.

One survivor, suffering from shock, was told 'You can't have sick leave because we haven't got the men'. The soldiers were not allowed a period of grief, were refused permission to attend the funerals, and sent straight to South Armagh, one of the most hostile areas possible. The result of this treatment was mutiny, with 'other ranks' refus-

shattered. Another leak to *The Observer* in December revealed that the Ministry of Defence in the Six Counties is suffering a staffing crisis: 567 civil servants, one in five, had left in the two years up to June 1989. In the same period financial and marital problems increased by 10%, and alcohol abuse almost doubled.

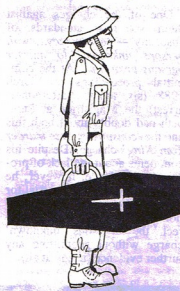
This is a direct result of IRA targeting, and recruitment is not making up for the high turnover. MOD and other sectors of the apparatus of state repression are significant sources of employment for the unionist population, and this staffing crisis would suggest war-weariness among that community. It is hardly surprising that less than 1,000 of the 300,000 unionists predicted by Orange Order leader Martin Smythe turned out to protest at the 4th Anniversary of the Hillsborough Agreement in November.

The British government will one day sit down with the Republican Movement to negotiate a cease-fire as part of a phased military and political withdrawal. The shattered morale and falling recruitment of both the British army and the civilian component of the war machine would suggest that the end is not far from sight. Since Brooke admitted this the British state cannot escape responsibility for all the deaths in this, its last colonial war.

It is the duty of anti-imperialists to hasten that end by publicising the realities of the war in Ireland in the face of the constant stream of fanciful propaganda in the British press about 'IRA setbacks'. We should not take the liberal line of wanting to save 'our boys' from a situation that 'we' — i.e., the state — have

created in the first place. Mutiny against officers' insensitivity should be replaced by mutiny against fighting in Ireland.

The nature of the Army, in which working class squaddies are abused by upper class officers, is inherently anti-working class. Nationalist violence and inter regiment rivalry among squaddies bears a close resemblance to the football hooliganism imperialist politicians are swift to condemn. No more working class youths should have to die in a war they don't understand.



While the anti-unionist community in the Six Counties have grown strong from more than 20 years of resistance, the effects in Britain can be summed up by the words of the mother of Gunner Robert Curtis, the first British soldier to be killed by the IRA in 1971 — 'After 20 years soldiers are still being killed there. It seems so pointless. Nothing's changed.'

F.O'NEILL

armed struggle must continue until apartheid was completely dismantled, which was hardly criticised by the BBC at all.

What was more interesting, however, was the news item that followed it. A British Army helicopter had been shot at (the British army has not admitted that it was in fact shot down) in 'Northern Ireland' injuring three of the soldiers on board (one with serious gunshot wounds). Who committed this attack? Was it a 'brave, courageous freedom fighter', trying to hinder the occupation forces of his country? No, in fact it was gunned down, according to the BBC, by the 'terrorist' IRA. It's good to see a bit of impartial reporting now and again isn't it?

The Public Transport Corporation and the Government could not tolerate this and promptly turned off the electricity supply, immobilising the trams. However, before this happened, tram drivers had run all the trams into the centre of Melbourne, causing several blockages. Ten days later they were still there.

In response to this action the workers occupied all the tram depots and set up strike committees and support groups. As we go to press (beginning of March) we hear that the strike is over, but financial help is still needed. Send international money orders, etc., to: The Delegate, Brunswick Tram Depot, Sydney Road, Brunswick, 3036, Victoria, Australia.

IMPARTIAL

It was quite interesting to see the extended BBC News on the evening of Nelson Mandela's release. Most of the hour-long coverage was littered with comments about this 'brave and courageous freedom fighter'. Quite something for the conservative BBC as he was, in fact, jailed on charges of involvement in sabotage campaigns for the cause of an illegal organisation against the South African state — not quite the BBC's idea of 'the done thing'. He was also quite clearly heard in his 'freedom speech' to say that the

TRAM SANDWICH

On the 1st of January this year tram workers in Melbourne, Australia took control of the tram system in the city and operated it themselves, without management interference, and refused to charge fares. This was in reaction to the bosses' plans to force tram workers to sign contracts compelling them to operate a new ticket system that would have led to over 1,400 job losses, as well as more than doubling the fares.

STRONG CONVICTIONS

The case of the Winchester Three — Finbarr Cullen, Martina Shanahan and John McCann — differs from those frame-ups of innocent Irish people, such as that of the Birmingham Six, which are presently under greater scrutiny as a result of the release of the Guildford Four. Unlike previous cases there was no IRA operation to fit them up for, no guns or explosives, and no confessions beaten out of them like in '74.

One of the charges against them set new standards of absurdity — 'conspiracy... with persons unknown', to murder persons unknown! At the committal proceedings in March 1988 (six months after their arrest) the Magistrate at Lambeth had doubts about both this and the 'conspiracy... to murder Tom King' charge. Despite his comments about the lack of prosecution evidence, however, he committed the Three for trial for the second charge. The prosecution was later allowed to resurrect the 'persons unknown' charge without submitting any further evidence (ie any at all).

'gang', and creating the impression that guns and explosives, and evidence of an IRA 'plot', had all been uncovered. The SAS are the only people who are not to be tried by media, it seems.

The trial itself was held in Winchester, a garrison town where seven regiments which have served, and suffered casualties, in Ireland are based. This was hardly conducive to a fair trial. It opened on October 6th 1988, and its second week coincided with the Tory Party conference at Brighton, amid the publicity surrounding the



GROUND CONTROL TO MAJOR TOM

Their court appearances were accompanied by high profile and security. Why go to such trouble and expense if these people weren't 'dangerous terrorists'?

As a final piece of harassment/evidence, family and friends of Martina Shanahan were detained for four days under the Prevention of Terrorism Act while returning to Ireland after attending the committal hearings in March. Her sister was served with an exclusion order, banning her from Britain. This can only have been to create an impression of a fictitious 'terrorist connection', aided by those willing conduits of M15 disinformation the British Press.

The arrest, remand and committal hearings, as well as the trial itself, were all accompanied by headlines in the papers asserting that the Three were an IRA

'heroic' return after the 1984 bombing. High ranking Tories were the alleged targets of the 'conspiracy' for which the Three were being tried.

The trial consisted mostly of challenges to the prosecution's lack of evidence by the defence. The defendants decided to

remain silent, but Tom King, their alleged target, chose to call a press conference to announce withdrawal of the right to silence in the Six Counties — inferring that those who remain silent are guilty — during the trial.

In spite of all this, the jury, which had been vetted by Special Branch to eradicate any sympathies with the defendants, found it extremely difficult to reach a verdict. A ten to two verdict of guilty on both charges for all three was only reached when the judge virtually instructed the jurors to do so. They received 25 year sentences.

In the absence of the hysteria created by the Guildford, Woolwich and Birmingham tragedies in 1974, when anti-Irish feeling ran very high indeed, such an atmosphere has been 'created' by the state and the press. Instead of being able to beat and fabricate confessions to actual IRA actions from innocent Irish people, they have had to whip up an atmosphere of extreme British nationalism, and use show trials relying on the assumption by 'law abiding' people that there must be some justification for all this trouble and expense.

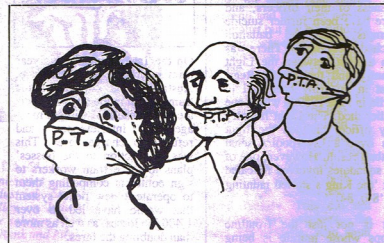
The purpose is the same — to cow the Irish community and seize hostages for their good behaviour, and that of the IRA — but the implications are far more serious. 'New' evidence can not be found to refute 'evidence' that never existed in the first place. A frame-up machine like the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad can not be exposed. Nothing short of the exposure of the entire state/media conspiracy, with the absence of any damage-limitation possibilities to induce another Guildford Four-style release, will get these three innocent people out of jail.

That might seem an impossible task, but it must be undertaken. Clearly the state has learnt from the collapse of the Guildford Four frame-up, and moved on. These show trials are also useful to the British state as a means of reproducing nationalist ideology, the key source of its legitimisation. As the collapse of Stalinism reduces the usefulness of cold warmongering, the 'enemy within' in the shape of the Irish community and 'terrorism' has become its chief target.

The Winchester frame-up must be exposed, and the pressure from the working class, Irish or not, necessary to do so must be built. 'British justice' would have a hard time claiming the release of the Winchester Three proves that it exists!

F.O'Neill

The Winchester Three Campaign can be contacted for further info: c/o Grass Roots, 1 Newton Street, Manchester 1.



VNU STRIKE

At the end of November last year 98 members of the NUJ, employed by VNU Publications Ltd., (computer and accountancy periodicals) in London went on strike for refusing to accept individual contracts instead of the traditional union negotiations of the past. In recent months some of the publishing industry bosses have been trying to erode the role of the unions in line with other industries. The erosion has been more subtle than in other industries, with the unions being allowed, but shifting negotiations from the union to the individual, as News International intend to do with journalists at the News of the World and The Sun (although rumour has it that the journalists at the Sun intend to take action against this — somewhat ironic after Wapping).

As we go to press (mid-February) only eleven of the original strikers have returned to work, with management intending to organise a 'buyout' of the workers. VNU have been badly hit by the action, having to draft in scab freelancers and lift editorial and news items from similar publications in the United States.

The NUJ have advertised in various journalist papers asking journalists not to work for VNU and to support the strike action. As a result of this the two largest recruitment agencies in the publishing world, Media Network and Price Jamieson, have refused to handle recruitment for VNU.

The strike is still going strong with pickets outside VNU House, Broadwick Street, W1A, and contracts being burnt in public. More info as we get it.

POLAND

There has been a lively anarchist scene in Poland for several years. In October 1988 the Polish Anarchist Federation (Miedzynastowa Anarchistyczna) was established. But they have a big problem — printing. The anarchist press in Poland is badly produced and irregular. This is not a reflection of the actual strength of the libertarian movement, but is due to the fact that access to printing facilities is limited. There are only the state printing offices and the printing presses owned by the Catholic, pro-capitalist opposition, and neither are particularly interested in furthering the anarchist cause! An appeal was launched in 1989 to purchase a press for the MA, but it came to a standstill due to the difficulties of importing printing machinery into Poland. This problem no longer exists, and the appeal has been relaunched. The international anarchist movement has an opportunity to help the Polish anarchist movement at a crucial time in its history. Send donations to the account: CCP Rey 306404 G, Nantes Cheques, 44000 Nantes, France. Or money orders can be sent to the MA representative in France, who can also provide further information: Marcin Rey, c/o Christian Veron, 6 Rue de Hauts Pavés, 44000 Nantes, France.

FINLAND

The Metalworkers' Union branch at the Rautaruukki metal factory in Finland heard that South African manganese was being transported to Finland and Norway against boycott decisions and decided to take action against it. Of course the politicians and bosses were not interested in boycotting the apartheid regime in South Africa, so the Union took industrial action to force bosses to stop using South African manganese.

The union banned manganese and so it was not removed from the harbour, forcing the Rautaruukki management to back down.

Workers are the only force that can control the boycott against the apartheid regime. The bosses won't do it, politicians neither. This is a fact proved time and time again.



Nurses are getting angry in Finland, especially in Helsinki. There are more and more patients and less equipment to handle the growing number of patients. The wages are low and so young people are not interested in working in hospitals. But the nurses decided that enough was enough — They walked out for one day in Helsinki, quite spontaneously. At the same time other members of the union called the KTV (council workers, bus drivers, nurses, cooks, etc.) in the Helsinki area went on a one-day strike demanding extra pay for living in the capital, where the cost of living is much higher than other parts of the country. Over 20,000 workers went on strike.

The council authorities said that it wasn't possible to give extra pay, because they could not afford it. There may be a big strike as a result of this in the near future.

Source: SAL, IWA support group, Finland.

PITTSTON

As we go to press, the Pittston Miners' Strike (see DA 61, The Pitts) in West Virginia, USA seems set to end.

In January a tentative agreement was reached, containing both work rule changes and the company's right to subcontract work out of the mines. Concessions to the strikers include pay increases and bonus agreements. The exact details of the agreement have not been released yet as, under US law, agreements must be balloted over beforehand.

The agreement has not been put to the members yet as the officials are trying to get the heavy fines (several thousand million dollars) lifted. Also delaying things is the fact that both the miners' union and the Pittston bosses still face unresolved charges from the National Labour Relations Board. More info next issue.

LETTERS

Dear DA,

The publication seems to be going down hill lately. Apart from the crap layout and abysmal production quality there is a note of liberalism creeping into its pages.

First we have someone, who remains anonymous, advocating the liberal concept of 'balance' in "Knee-capped" (DA 66), now we have "Richard" saying "we demand certain laws to be implemented for our benefit" by the bosses or the state. This is not the anarcho-syndicalist position it is portrayed as.

Laws regarding employment can be useful as a generally accepted standard for conditions or as a right that should be fought for. The bosses habitually break as many laws as they can if they know about them at all.

For example, my employer (labour controlled Hackney Council), makes illegal deductions from pay without notice as a matter of course. No amount of demands for the implementation of the Payment of Wages Act have the slightest effect. Even on my TUC Stage One Shop Stewards' course we were taught that it is up to workers to ENFORCE laws or collective agreements, not to demand the boss does.

The anarcho-syndicalist position is, of course, that laws achieve nothing and that rights can only be gained and enforced by direct action.

In "Anarcho-syndicalism" Rudolf Rocker illustrates this on the level of political action, but it applies equally well to the smallest detail of working conditions. The key to the enforcement of rights is a consensus among the workers involved that they will fight for them. A law is an indicator of what the bosses cannot openly deny and they usually contain more disadvantages for the working class than rights (which we have already won, or they would not be legislated).

Our objective should never be the enforcement of laws, rather the development of a political consciousness among workers which recognises rights that must be fought for, and which seeks them through direct action which builds the

confidence to go for the revolution.

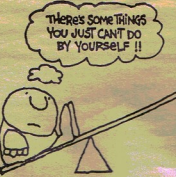
Come on, DA readers, more hard, practical, agitational articles and less woolly liberalism, please.

NR, N London DAM

PS. Can we have an explanation of the Readers Soapbox feature?

REPLY: We believe that a vital part of the role of an anarcho-syndicalist paper such as DA is to stimulate debate, not just for the hell of it, but so as to develop ideas and make them useful. We have set aside Readers Soapbox for articles beyond the confines of news and 'objective' historical and theoretical articles as a space for opinion and personal views. This is not meant as a free-for-all but is part of making DA a lively and living paper.

DA Editorial Collective



Dearest DA,

I'm writing in reply to an article in DA67 entitled "Out to Win", under the banner "Reader's Soapbox".

Firstly, the pun in the title smacked of school boy humour, and wasn't relevant to the article. The Proverbial closet needs to be smashed to win, not come out of. Gay people have been closeted not by themselves, but by prejudice and laws.

Secondly, "we oppose all laws as such but" leaves a lot to be desired. As anarcho-syndicalists we should be aiming at all times to limit the power the state has over our lives. To advocate laws which supposedly benefit the working class is to pander to naive reformism. ALL laws should be seen as the tools of the state, not the revolutionary.

While sometimes we can make use of existing laws to our benefit, we should never be trapped into believing that

any of them are there to protect us. However well meaning the reasoning behind legislation is (eg: the Race Relations Act), these are double-edged blades, and they are weighted in the states' favour.

Surely, as we wish to see our class fighting the bosses directly and taking the struggle into their own hands, we shouldn't be advocating more of the same!

What we are for is not more laws but working class direct action to secure our future. If there is prejudice and discrimination, we should be fighting it with education, agitation and organisation.

How can we fight homophobia and discrimination in the workplace (especially now that we have an AIDS epidemic being blamed solely on gay men), if we ask for the struggle to be taken out of the workplace? The writer in the second half of the article says this anyway - can he not see that the law he is advocating will have the effect of nullifying our combative effectiveness?

The words "if the law is not applied, we must use direct action" are the crux of the matter. The law as such, ie it's illegal to discriminate against gay people, would be ignored by the bosses (as is the Race Relations Act). When we try in the workplace to defend the right of a worker against discrimination, we'll find it a damn sight harder because we have played into the bosses' hands. We'll find other workers declaring that a law exists to protect people against this sort of thing, and IT will sort it out so why take action? We'll also find that people who are discriminated against will not look to other workers to protect them, but to the law.



We should not be saying "if the law is not applied" - fuck the law! Use direct action in the first place, it'll save time.

Lastly, as an anarcho-syndicalist, I don't believe in 'piles' on which

issues should be top or bottom. All attacks on our class and all encroachments by the state on our lives must be fought with equal and determined struggle. There is no "single most important issue" except winning the class war. The issues of the day are the battleground on which we fight, but if we wish to see "freedom which is regulated by free people through free agreements", the war must first be won.

Mick, Sheffield

Dear DA,

I was very pleased to find an article in your paper that attempted to raise some of the issues around lesbian and gay liberation. A rare event for any publication of the anarchist tradition!

It is true the AWG did stick their head out of the closet in SFB No.2. Only time will tell whether they will emerge into the real debate out here, or whether they will rejoin the other left groups packed in the closet.

It would clearly be impossible to deal in one letter with many of the important issues raised by Richard. One of the topics mentioned is perhaps of more immediate interest to your readers: the attitudes of left groups towards the lesbian and gay movement.

Richard's letter attacks other groups on the left, naming the SWP and WP for their inconsistent line on sexual politics. In view of this specific reference, it is worth noting that since the turn of the century all of the organised left, including the anarchist tradition, has consistently failed to seriously develop a revolutionary understanding of human sexuality and the world-wide emergence of a lesbian and gay identity in particular.

The blossoming in the late 60s of a militant force of people rejecting institutionalised heterosexual monogamy, characterised by slogans such as "Make Love Not War" and organisations such as the Gay Liberation Front, shook the established 'libertarian' movements of the time.

These groups, such as the IS (forerunner of the SWP) either attempted to ignore the struggle and characterise it as 'petit-bourgeois', or superficially tried to understand the

phenomenon. Essentially the majority if not all these groups rejected the issues, seeing the struggle as merely another recruiting ground for their particular sect.

It could even be argued that, on this issue, these groups policed the established left in its own interests and ultimately those of the ruling class. The monopoly of organised politics by individuals predominantly from a small section of society (ie white, male, heterosexually-orientated and possibly middle class) may suggest a reason for their hostility and consequent neglect of an understanding and debate on human sexuality.

Richard's plea to prioritise such a debate and reject "tail-ending" lesbian and gay struggles appears to be the first step towards a more productive period of struggle and growth.



I fear, however, that the criticism of other left groups, especially the reference to merely "tail-ending" struggles and forgetting the issues raised in the lull between, could at present be a criticism levelled by other groups at DAM.

I sincerely hope that the important issues raised by the article take firm root amongst your readership and specifically your organisation. I look forward to the emergence of consistent, practical and theoretical contributions to an understanding and development of the lesbian and gay struggle from the anarchist tradition.

Love,
Ciaran, Manchester

DIRECT ACTION

Anti Poll Tax Demo

Saturday 3 1st March

Kennington Park, London, 12pm.

SERIOUS CRIME

The prison staff at Frankland Jail are determined to deny Martin Foran the medical attention he needs for his infected colostomy wound, whilst at the same time disrupting his chances of medical treatment from outside surgeons. Moreover, the investigation into his 1985 conviction for robbery and conspiracy to rob has been hindered by officers from the West Midlands police destroying material relating to his initial arrest.

The authorities at Frankland have deliberately misled the Home Office concerning the state of Martin's physical condition, this is in fact nothing new. The authorities have also denied that the attack on Martin which took place on June 30th 1986 at Walton Jail happened. Yet on April 4th 1989, when Ken Livingstone asked the Attorney General if criminal charges would be brought against Martin's assailants, who were members of the medical staff at Walton, he replied that 'in the civil proceedings to which Hon. Member refers the action was stayed upon terms that £750 be paid to the plaintiff'.

If the prison is to be believed, the courts are handing out taxpayers' money for non-existent incidents. The prison seems anxious to disguise the fact that Martin was viciously assaulted by members of staff while he

was trying to recuperate from an operation, and that the resultant infection has led to Martin's present difficulties.

Recently officers from West Yorks. police have been investigating Martin's arrests and convictions, examining both the 1985 and 1978 cases. When Martin was arrested on September 10th 1984 his time of arrest (2pm) was altered to 3.05pm by officers who were trying to fabricate evidence to aid the prosecution case. Officers investigating the case now admit that it would have been physically impossible for Martin to have carried out the sequence of events on that day maintained by the prosecution.

Birmingham lawyer Mark Phillips sought the original prisoners in custody sheet from Bradford Street police station, so that forensic tests could be

carried out on it. Officers investigating Martin's case asked to see this document, but were only given a half size photocopy with one of its edges missing. Now Mark Phillips has been informed that the original document has been destroyed.

The officer at the centre of the 1984/85 case, Detective Inspector Paul Matthews, went 'missing' from the West Midlands Serious Crimes Squad. This elite police unit has always been silent about this officer, who rose through its ranks and then disappeared. Chris Mullin MP has received a written reply from the Home Office that Matthews was required to resign on September 23rd 1986 following disciplinary proceedings which found him guilty of failing to obey lawful orders. As well as fabricating the evidence which led to Martin's conviction for 'robbery and conspiracy to rob' in May 1985, Matthews fabricated the 'confession' of Paddy Hill, one of the Birmingham Six, in 1974 while a detective constable.

When inquiries commenced into other cases related to the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad last summer, it transpired that certain other key documents had gone missing. Martin has been informed by officers from West Yorkshire that the next step in their investigation will probably be to interview all the witnesses. It will be interesting to see if they are able to find the whereabouts of ex-DI Matthews.

Martin has now completed the sentence imposed on him in 1985, and is serving a second one for his conviction of 'false imprisonment of a warder' in November 1987. This concerned an incident in April 1986 when Martin held a screw hostage to highlight his neglected medical condition. On November 30th Martin resorted to a hunger strike for the same reasons, which he soon ended, although he is still claiming that he is not receiving treatment for his colostomy, and is still pressing his case against two doctors at Frankland Prison for 'negligence'. Martin is having to resort to this kind of pressure in spite of the fact that it is now clear that he should never have been convicted in the first place.

Mike Shankland, c/o 'Conviction', PO Box 522, Sheffield, S1 3FF



TAKE IT!

Our Spanish comrades in the CNT-AIT have been taking direct action to force the Ministry of Labour to return the union's 'historic patrimony'. That is the assets lost by the union after the victory of the fascists in 1939, which the 'democratic' state pretends it intends to return to the unions in proportion to their size and influence at the time of seizure. Since it includes buildings and large sums of money, the refusal to return it to a union is a significant limitation on its ability to operate. The reformist UGT, linked to the Socialist Party, has had no problems, but the state does not want to return assets to the revolutionary CNT-AIT, the larger of the two unions in 1936-39.

Repeated court decisions have ruled in favour of the CNT-AIT, despite the excuse of the phoney 'CNT', now renamed the CGT, used to delay action on these decisions. Unsurprisingly, the revolutionary CNT-AIT is being discriminated against. The CGT, which has no history, and

no influence in the workplace, relying on electoralism in the 'works committees' not union membership, has been given premises by the state. The continued discrimination against the CNT-AIT merely demonstrates the futility of eight years of prolonged action through the courts.

Over the summer months the CNT-AIT has been occupying premises in different parts of Spain, and also occupying the Ministry of Labour. On October 5th 1989 simultaneous actions and occupations took place in Seville, Cordoba, La Coruna, Bilbao, Alicante, Oviedo, Murcia, Barcelona and Gijon. An attempt to occupy the Ministry of Labour in Madrid was prevented by the Civil Guard, whose action in denying CNT members access was technically illegal. CNT members were arrested in La Coruna and Granada. The state will grant nothing to revolutionaries on the basis of its laws, they will have to take it.

DA COLLECTIVE

MURDER

We're hearing a lot these days about the historic events in East Germany. A recent episode in West Germany in which the police killed an anti-fascist hasn't been widely publicised though...

The police in Göttingen (Lower Saxony) had for a long time been waiting for an opportunity to get stuck into the lively anarchist movement which has developed there in recent years. For some time they had been taking advantage of skirmishes between neo-nazi skinheads and anarchists in order to attack the anarchists.

On the night of 17th November anti-fascists saw off a nazi provocation. Then as usual the police arrived on the scene to make mass arrests, and dish out the usual beatings no doubt. As the comrades tried to escape the police chased on foot and in

vehicles. One of the cars that mounted the pavement ran down and killed a comrade called Cornelia, known as Conny to everyone who went to the movement's pub where she worked.

In a mood of anger comrades staged a vigil on the corner where she was killed. On the night of November 20th the police attacked the vigil in force. After bitter clashes about twenty arrests were made.

At this point it got too much even for public opinion and the Interior Minister of Lower Saxony intervened to restrain the police and re-establish a semblance of 'legality'. An inquiry into the police conduct has been launched. In the meantime a 24 year old comrade has been killed.

DM

